

**The Gauge O Guild Limited**  
(Company number 02640556)  
(Any reference to "The Guild" or "Guild" refers to the company)

**Code of Behaviour**

(This supersedes the previous Disciplinary and Grievance Policy)

The Gauge O Guild aims to advance the hobby of railway modelling in scales and gauges associated with the designation O. In order to make the most of the opportunities the Guild provides, all members, including those who have committee or voluntary roles are expected to participate in its activities in a spirit of friendship. We should treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of modelling interests, knowledge, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Members should be polite in all their interactions whether face to face, in print or via social media, treating others as they would wish to be treated themselves. As we do not know what is happening in the lives of others, we need to be considerate in all of our interactions, ensuring that expressions of opinion and exchanges of advice or feedback are constructive, non-judgmental and not made on the basis of rumour, supposition or malice. We must not discriminate against or harass fellow members nor place unrealistic expectations on them. Each member is an ambassador for the Guild and should not act in ways which bring it into disrepute. Members are encouraged to challenge inappropriate behaviour if they see or experience it.

The Management Committee is elected by Guild members and has a moral and legal duty to members and to the Guild as a company. This Code of Behaviour is one of the ways in which the Management Committee fulfils its responsibilities to promote positive behaviours, ensure that all members are treated with dignity and respect and outline the action they can take where this does not happen. Where members' behaviours or actions do not meet these standards, we have a procedure which allows concerns to be raised, investigated and if necessary acted upon in a fair and transparent way. This is set out in Appendix 1. It is expected that most issues will be resolved using this process.

In the rare instance when the Management Committee becomes aware of serious allegations or evidence of unacceptable actions or behaviours, that have not been raised through this process, then it may deal with these in line with Rule 14.2.5 of 'The Rules of the Gauge O Guild Limited'.

The Guild hosts a members 'Forum' on its website and this document will replace relevant Forum Rules with the current moderation process continuing. There are some specific issues relating to postings on the Forum which cannot be covered in this document. These need to remain in place and, for information, are outlined in Appendix 2.

## **Appendix 1. Dealing with Members' Concerns**

### **Informal Resolution**

In the vast majority of cases inappropriate behaviour may occur in the heat of a moment or something might be interpreted differently to the way it was meant. It is therefore most likely that concerns about the behaviour of another member can be discussed privately and an outcome reached that is acceptable to both members. A personal apology may be the solution, or a third party might be asked to give their opinion on the matter if appropriate. We are sure that all members will wish to resolve concerns informally by whatever means are appropriate before taking the matter further.

Where informal resolution is not possible, members will be expected to seek resolution via the formal process set out below.

### **Formal Process**

#### **Concern raised by a member against another member**

A member who wishes to raise a formal concern about another member should do so in writing to the Secretary who will appoint two impartial investigators drawn from the list of Guild investigators.

#### **Concern raised by a member about a Director or Directors**

A member who wishes to raise a formal concern about an individual Director or Directors should do so in writing to the Guild President. The President will appoint two impartial investigators drawn from the list of Guild investigators

*N.B. The list of Guild investigators/adjudicators is made up of Directors and Vice Presidents/other Guild officers plus member volunteers who have agreed to be on the list having completed relevant training.*

#### **Process for Resolving a Formal Concern**

The investigators will arrange a meeting without unreasonable delay. This meeting may be face to face, by phone or video conference. A record will be kept of any meetings by the investigators.

The investigators will seek to understand the concern or complaint, identify any witnesses, identify and pursue areas for further investigation (including access to content of Forum posts, messages, Wiki and other Guild information systems) and explore the complainant's desired outcome with the aim of achieving a fair and equitable resolution. The investigators will ensure that the subject of any complaint is given a fair hearing. All evidence will be made available to all parties involved.

**Confidentiality** must be maintained by all parties during all parts of the process. Any breach of this would be regarded as gross misconduct.

**Record Keeping** - Records of any active investigations/misconduct reviews will be stored securely with restricted access. All investigation records will be destroyed after an outcome is reached and the appeal deadline has passed. The record of the final outcome is kept until the sanction is spent. Thereafter, that record will also be destroyed. The Guild secretary is responsible for destroying all records.

Members asked to attend meetings as part of the investigation may be accompanied by another member and confidentiality must be maintained. If either party does not know another member but would like support at meetings, their Constituency Representative should be contacted. This Representative can attend if they are impartial, or they can recommend another suitable member.

#### **Potential Outcomes following an Investigation**

The investigators will decide one of the following outcomes and confirm this in writing.

##### **1. Genuine concern, not upheld.**

The investigators may conclude that the allegation cannot be upheld because of lack of evidence but accepts that the member raising the concern felt genuine distress. The member will have a right to appeal against this outcome and should submit their appeal in writing to the Guild President within 14 calendar days of receiving the outcome, setting out the grounds for their appeal. (see appeals process)

## **2. Inappropriate behaviour that breaches the Code**

The investigators may conclude that there are reasonable grounds to believe that misconduct which breaches the Code has taken place and will refer the matter to a misconduct review.

## **3. Malicious or Diversionary concern**

The investigators may conclude that the concern was raised maliciously or raised as a distraction or diversion and will refer the complainant to a misconduct review.

## **Misconduct Review**

For allegations made by one member against another the Secretary will appoint three adjudicators from the Guild list who have not been part of the investigation to undertake a misconduct review.

Where an allegation has been made against a Director, The President will appoint three adjudicators from the Guild list who have not been part of the investigation.

The appointed panel of three adjudicators will have access to all documents from the initial investigation and will be free to seek further information or interview witnesses as necessary before taking a final decision.

Where the investigation concludes that misconduct has taken place, in all cases, any of the following sanctions, may be applied depending on the gravity of the misconduct:

- ***Apology - copy of letter to be held for three months***  
The member who has breached the code is required to make a written apology to the complainant, copy to be provided as evidence of issuance, to be returned after agreed term. A further breach or refusal to issue a letter of apology may result in another sanction being applied.
- ***Letter of censure - to remain active for three months.***  
The letter will confirm that unacceptable behaviour has taken place. Any further breach of the code within the life of the sanction may result in temporary suspension of membership.
- ***Temporary suspension of membership - to remain active for six months.***  
Any further breach of the code within six months of reinstatement may result in termination or non-renewal of membership.
- ***Termination or non-renewal of membership***  
To be applied in the most serious cases of breach of the code or where multiple breaches of the code have occurred.

In the exceptional case when a Misconduct Review concludes that the gravity of misconduct requires the sanction of, either suspension of membership or, termination of membership, this will be escalated to the Management Committee to review as outlined in Rule 14 of 'The Rules of the Gauge O Guild Limited'.

## **Appeals Process**

Any member who is found to have breached the code and had a sanction applied has a right to appeal against the decision. An appeal should be submitted to the President within 14 calendar days setting out the grounds for the appeal. The President will normally hear all appeals but can appoint an impartial vice president if there is a clear conflict of interest or other constraint.

## Appendix 2. Forum posts and the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour replaces many of the relevant Forum rules.

### Forum process

- If someone believes that a Forum post is inappropriate and breaches the code of behaviour, they use the report function.
- The Forum Moderators will receive any reports made.
- The post will be hidden to prevent any further upset or comments.
- The Forum moderators will inform affected members of their moderating actions.
- All decisions made by a Forum moderator are final and no correspondence will be entered into either on the Forum or by other means.
- If a member is not satisfied by the moderating actions they can be referred to the Forum Manager who will have been advised of the actions taken. Should the matter still not be able to be resolved, then the complaint can be investigated using the Formal Process, as detailed in Appendix 1.

### The Forum User Compliance Requirements standalone from the Code and are a condition of access to the Forum:

- The Forum is open only to members aged 16 and over.
- Posting of images of minors (under 16s) is only acceptable if **all three** of the following requirements are met:
  - The minor's full name is not used.
  - There is no way to identify where the minor lives.
  - Prior permission to post the image has been obtained from the parent or guardian. You must state that such permission has been granted. *N.B. (A separate Safeguarding Policy and Image Consent form is available).*
- Material posted must not infringe copyright. It is the responsibility of the poster to obtain reproduction permission before posting and to confirm that this has been obtained.
- Members must not allow their account to be used by any other member.
- The trade announcements category is for presentation of factual information about commercially available goods and services. Traders may direct members to websites and other sources of information about pricing and other offers.

### **Prepared by the following Working Party Members:**

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### **Version Control:**

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